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RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2062
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0061
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0695
RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA 1613
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 0463
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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: UNSYG REP CONCERNED ABOUT BAKASSI HANDOVER

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Ambassador Said Djinnit, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative to the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission on the Bakassi border issue, expressed concern over security and other matters in connection with the upcoming (August 14) transfer of authority in the zone currently under Nigerian administration. He stressed the need for quick action on economic assistance for the inhabitants of the peninsula to prevent social unrest. Djinnit offered his assessment in a May 27 meeting in Yaounde with Greentree Agreement observer states US, UK, France and Germany; no Government of Cameroon officials were present. Representatives of observer states will be invited to the August 14 event if security concerns can be managed. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Djinnit said he was focused on building on the work of his predecessor in implementing the provisions of the Greentree accord as a demonstration of how disputes can be settled through dialogue rather than force. He reported that Nigerian government authorities up to and including the Vice President told him repeatedly during a recent visit to Abuja that the Government of Nigeria would "honor its obligations and abide by the rule of law." But he said he was "worried about criminal networks" and "agitation" from local residents opposed to the Greentree accord.

¶3. (SBU) Djinnit said the GON's policy was to offer resettlement to its nationals living in the administrative zone, "but nothing in the meantime to help the people." He said Cameroon PM Ephraim Inoni told him on May 26 that the GRC was planning to provide assistance to the Nigerian inhabitants in the zone as soon as it reverted to full Cameroonian sovereignty. But he appealed for a "rapid reaction program" from the observer states to ensure that the transfer went smoothly.

¶4. (SBU) Accompanying Djinnit were two political advisors and a senior military advisor, all based with Djinnit at the UN Office for West Africa in Dakar. One advisor noted that some land border demarcation issues remained, including several potential "hot spots." The military advisor added that there would be two more military observer missions in the zone prior to the August 14 handover date.

¶5. (SBU) At a dinner May 27 hosted by Vice Prime Minister/Minister of Justice Amadou Ali and attended by several ministers and representatives of the presidency, Djinnit noted the warm welcome of the Cameroon government and hailed the Greentree Agreement as an example of successful conflict/border resolution for the rest of Africa, which he noted had hundreds of other territorial disputes. He praised the GRC and GON for their courageous decisions in resolving the Bakassi issue and respecting the rule of law, adding that settling border disputes involves "not only territory but also intellectual and cultural borders."

¶6. (SBU) Comment. Djinnit made no mention at the dinner of his concerns about security in connection with the upcoming transfer of authority and the need for quick action on the economic front; he spoke more freely in his earlier, private meeting with observer state representatives. Commenting on a song performed during the evening about a child at war, Djinnit added that he planned to spend considerable time in his new capacity combating the use of child soldiers in Africa.

GARVEY